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Testimony

In Support of SB 198, AAC Desecration of War or Veterans' Memorials Special Committee on Veterans Affairs February 28, 2012

Good morning Chairmen Leone and Hennessy, Ranking members Adinolfi and Welch.

I am Senator Kevin Kelly of the 21st district covering the towns of Stratford, Shelton, Monroe and Seymour. I am testifying today in support of **SB 198, AAC Desecration of War or Veterans' Memorials**.

Let me start by saying thank you for raising this very important bill, this issue hits very close to home for me.

Last year, during Memorial Day weekend, vandals struck Veterans Park in Shelton. They turned American Flags upside down, sprayed graffiti on the sidewalks, and sprayed more on the monuments themselves. It happened two nights in a row, leading up to the Memorial Day ceremonies that are held at the park every year.

I was disgusted and appalled that these vandals had absolutely no respect for the veterans who are represented in that park. They have no respect for those men and women who put their lives on the line every day to ensure the free world that we live in. They have no compassion for these places to gather and remember those who made the supreme sacrifice for our country so we can enjoy the liberties that we do today.

This bill would impose harsher penalties on those who vandalize war or veteran's memorials. It would require that they pay out of pocket for the damages they caused and would impose stiffer fines if convicted.

The cornerstone to democracy is free speech. However, embodied in our First Amendment, there are limits to that freedom. We need to do everything we can to protect the veterans who provide service over our country, ensure our rights, and deserve our respect.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Sincerely,

Kevin C. Kelly
State Senator – 21st District